



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RICK PERRY
GOVERNOR

October 20, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

THROUGH: Mr. William Peterson, Regional Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI
Federal Regional Center
Denton, Texas 76209

THROUGH: Ms. Sandy Coachman, Federal Coordinating Officer
Joint Field Office - DR-1791 -TX
6001 Airport Boulevard, Suite D-200
Austin, Texas 78752

Dear Mr. President:

On September 13, 2008, a major disaster declaration was approved following Hurricane Ike for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance (Category A – debris removal) for 29 counties.

Amendment No. 1, effective on September 13, 2008, authorized funding for Category A – debris removal, at 100 percent of total eligible costs for a period of up to 72 hours.

Amendment No. 2, effective on September 16, 2008, authorized Public Assistance, Category B – emergency measures, for the same 29 counties.

Amendment No. 3, effective September 16, 2008, amended the previous declarations to authorize funding for both Categories A and B, including direct federal assistance, at 100 percent of total eligible costs for a 14-day period retroactive to the date of the disaster declaration.

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Amendment No. 7, effective October 8, 2008, amended the cost-sharing arrangement to authorize federal funds for assistance with debris removal and emergency protective measures (Categories A and B), including direct federal assistance under the Public Assistance Program at 100 percent of the total eligible costs for an additional 30 days beyond the previous 14-day period.

In accordance with 44CFR §206.47, I am now specifically requesting that the cost share adjustment for all Public Assistance (PA) Categories (A through G), including direct federal assistance and hazard mitigation, be expanded for all declared counties to 100 percent for a period of 18 months from the date of declaration.

The enclosed letter from the National Weather Service makes a solid case that Hurricane Ike's landfall on the Upper Texas Coast left more devastation for its residents than many realize. It explains that, although Ike's powerful size may not have been reflected in the strength of its winds, the enormous size of Ike's wind field (400 miles across) and time over the Gulf of Mexico produced a surge more characteristic of a Category 4 wind storm. The letter emphasizes that its energy destructive potential was among the highest of any Atlantic storm in the last 40 years, including Hurricane Katrina. Storm surges in Chambers County caused massive debris piles up to 100 feet high that will take months to sort through and remove.

I believe that the State of Texas has just experienced a catastrophic event that may prove to be the costliest disaster in the history of the state. To date, more than 700,000 households have registered for the Individual Assistance Program and more than \$250 million has been disbursed to individuals. Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) teams are still trying to determine the extent of the damages, and so far have verified public infrastructure and facilities eligible expenses/damages totaling \$1 billion. Early estimates from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) showed 30 million cubic yards of debris that will cost \$750 million for disposal operations.

Many of the same communities affected by Hurricane Ike were also affected by Hurricane Rita in 2005, for which the recovery process will now be prolonged.

Following a federal declaration, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grants are available statewide. HMGP is normally a 75-percent federal, 25-percent local match program. In small events, this match percentage works well, as impacted communities allocate some of their programmed Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to their proposed mitigation projects, or re-allocate funding from their storm-water management maintenance accounts. With Ike, however, the coastal communities are completely devastated. They need every cent of their

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HUD funding to reconstitute their housing inventory. Their tax revenues are slashed for much of the foreseeable future, so they will have a difficult time issuing bonds. Any and all storm-water maintenance funds they had accumulated will be spent simply returning their drainage systems to a barely functional level. Without 100 percent federal mitigation funding, these communities will simply be unable to participate in the mitigation grants, no matter how great the desire. Already, three coastal communities have indicated their willingness to participate in buyouts, but they cannot, due to the match requirement.

The federal cost share has been adjusted for past disasters to be more responsive to state and local recovery efforts. The federal cost share in Louisiana as a result of the 2005 hurricane season was adjusted to 100 percent for emergency work for 10 months for all declared parishes, and for 16 months in five parishes.

In addition, there have been instances when the cost share was adjusted to 100 percent for eligible permanent work after Hurricane Andrew in the States of Florida and Louisiana. The federal cost share for emergency work has been adjusted to 100 percent 35 times since 1998. To date, the federal cost share for permanent work has been adjusted from 75 percent to 90 percent 29 times since 1998.

I believe that Hurricane Ike's devastation warrants this request and has equaled or surpassed the scale of recent storms along the Gulf Coast. Therefore, I am asking that you give favorable consideration to the proposal that the cost share for Texas be eliminated due to the extreme hardship that communities will face while trying to recover in a timely and effective manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Perry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rick Perry
Governor

RP:jhp

Enclosure



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SOUTHERN REGION
819 Taylor Street, Room 10E09
Fort Worth, TX 76102

October 16, 2008

Jack Colley
Chief
Governor's Division of Emergency Management
Office of the Governor
5805 North Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78752

Dear Chief Colley:

On the morning of September 13, 2008, Hurricane Ike made landfall on Galveston Island. While we understand all hurricanes are not alike, we cannot overstate Ike's uniqueness with its tremendous surge and the resulting coastal devastation. Ike's coastal landfall on the Upper Texas Coast left more devastation for its residents than many realize. Ike was an unusually large storm with a tropical storm (39-74 mph sustained one-minute winds at 10 meters) wind field estimated to have been up to 400 miles across! Although Ike's powerful size may have not been reflected in the strength of its winds, the enormous size of Ike's wind field and time over the Gulf of Mexico, produced a surge more characteristic of a Category 4 wind storm. In fact, Ike's integrated kinetic energy (a measure of storm surge destructive potential) was among the highest of any Atlantic storm in the last 40 years, including Katrina.

Therefore, the resulting storm surge left a far more destructive effect on the coastal areas along (and just inland) of the Upper Texas Coast than one would imagine from only experiencing the storm's wind. This is because we had to apply the hurricane wind driven surge to Ike's extraordinarily large wind field to fully realize this storm's ocean surge. In addition, we could add even more height to the surge when the astronomical tide was in "sync" with the already terribly destructive storm surge. This total storm tide is what resulted and impacted the coastal areas. Our recent National Weather Service (NWS) Hurricane Ike assessment team, working in cooperation with local officials from Harris, Galveston, Chambers, and Jefferson Counties, did indeed verify such a devastating hurricane storm tide surge (see heights given below).

As one would expect, the highest surges occurred on the right side of Ike's circulation, over Chambers County, the upper and eastern portions of Galveston Bay, and across Bolivar Peninsula. Keep in mind that the devastation was further enhanced by the large destructive waves that were superimposed on the surge and tossing about the debris they certainly carry.

Specific surge determinations and estimates based on an assessment of high water marks* at locations within the impacted coastal counties are as follows:

- North and east shores of Galveston Bay: 15-20 feet
- Bolivar Peninsula: 15 feet (plus waves)
- San Leon, Bacliff, and Texas City: 15 feet
- San Jacinto and Houston Ship Channel: 14 feet
- La Porte, Seabrook, Kemah and Clear Lake: 13 feet
- Galveston Island: 13 feet (plus waves)
- Sabine Pass: 12.5 feet



- West end of Galveston Island: 12 feet
- Texas Point (Jefferson County): 11.8 feet**
- Port Arthur: 11.3 feet
- Rollover Pass (Galveston County): 11.1 feet

** data collected by both a NWS assessment team and representatives of the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD)*

*** sensor failed before highest surge was recorded*

Additional data from the assessment team's work is expected soon that will further substantiate Ike's devastating storm surge.

These preliminary surge values place Hurricane Ike's surge approaching the surge known to have destroyed some of the same coastal areas in the historical 1900 and 1915 hurricanes that made landfall at Galveston. Although Ike's impact on life was made much lower by heeded National Weather Service warnings, the state and local preparedness, and most important, the well executed response led by the State of Texas, we cannot ignore the tremendous work that still needs to be done to return the area to livable status from the destruction it experienced.

Sincerely,



Bill Proenza
Regional Director